Montana Schools of Promise:

The Story of Montana's School Improvement Grant (SIG) Model

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Developed by a Partnership between the
School Improvement Grant Unit and
the Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center

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Introduction

Turning around persistently low-performing schools is a critical problem facing our nation. In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education launched an ambitious effort to address that challenge, investing $3.5 billion to fund the School Improvement Grant's (SIG) Recovery Act program. As part of that initiative, funded under a combination of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) and Title I School Improvement funding of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Montana received $11.57 million to support SIG-eligible schools.

This report traces the process involved in identifying schools in need of improvement and developing and implementing plans to turn around those schools. However, in Montana the story begins even before the U.S. Department of Education took action, under the leadership of State Superintendent Denise Juneau. Prior to being elected as superintendent of public instruction, while serving as director of Indian Education under previous Superintendent Linda McCulloch, Juneau recognized that most of the lowest performing schools were located on or adjacent to the seven Indian reservations within Montana's borders. When sworn into office in January 2009, Superintendent Juneau, a member of the Mandan and Hidatsa tribes, promised to make the difficult decisions necessary to achieve the goal of turning around these schools and ensuring that all Montana students receive a high-quality education.

By reporting and reflecting on Montana's journey toward creating "Schools of Promise," we hope to offer the state's educational stakeholders some insight into the multiyear process. This report may also hold lessons for others involved in the challenging work of school turnaround.

Background and Planning for Year 1

Summer 2009 (Early Planning)

Beginning in summer 2009, Superintendent Juneau gathered her cabinet to develop a new strategy for improving student achievement. She formed an Office of Public Instruction (OPI) strategic direction committee that focused specifically on turnaround schools and was made up of representatives from all agency work units/divisions. A three-member team was then appointed to lead the strategic turnaround schools initiative. This team reviewed the research on what has worked in schools with similar demographics; hosted stakeholder sessions on several reservation communities with tribal councils, elected officials, teachers, students, school administrators, school boards, and community members to garner input and data; and developed a plan that would increase collaboration and ensure high-quality support of the schools in greatest need. Once the SIG information and guidelines became available later in the year, the team studied additional research and data and consulted with regional and national technical assistance centers to gather information that would serve as a strong foundation for potential SIG efforts. However, the group found no evidence that pointed toward a single solution that would fit the unique context faced in Montana's lowest performing schools. Nor did they find a research-based strategy that wasn't already in place—to one degree or another—within the Montana system.

The OPI team observed that some schools that were able to increase student achievement, decrease dropout rates, and improve the overall quality of education seemed to do so because of strong leaders or teams of leaders who inspired innovation and maintained success through continuous improvement efforts. Further, the committee reasoned that to sustain success over time, any new initiative must include the following steps:

- Build on the strengths and needs of each local district and community

- Reinforce a commitment to continuous growth and reflection

- Increase leadership effectiveness

- Assist teachers in all instructional areas

- Address fiscal management

- Incorporate the culture and values of the community and tribe
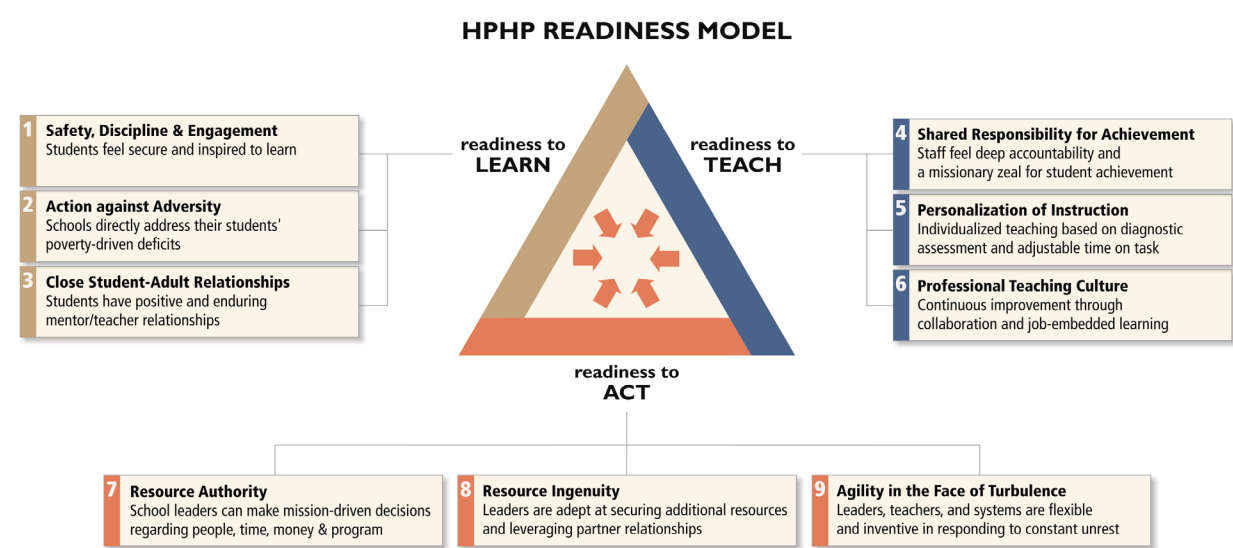
Fall 2009 (Gathering Data)

In fall 2009, Superintendent Juneau and other OPI staff began to look toward the federal school improvement grant (SIG) program to help turn around a small set of schools in rural/remote eastern Montana. These schools shared a common set of characteristics: All were very small and very rural, were located on an Indian reservation, and suffered from an entrenched culture of low achievement and low expectations. Many had also experienced substantial staff turnover and/or inconsistent management practices that sometimes resulted in unstable, chaotic, or otherwise dysfunctional work environments. Graduation and attendance rates were low and student engagement was not deep or sustained. The web of relationships among the district staff, the local community, tribal governments, and the local school board was often complex and lacking in clear, transparent communication channels. These schools did not seem to be able to reach a critical mass of staff to stabilize operations and maintain gains in student achievement. As with many other reservation communities, they suffered the gamut of social ills that plague low-income communities everywhere – high rates of unemployment, substance abuse, domestic violence, and health issues. These factors had a significant impact on students' emotional and social well-being and directly impacted how ready and able children were for educational environments. However, these communities also presented unique opportunities, strengths, and resiliency factors that could impact positive turnaround efforts.

Superintendent Juneau and the OPI turnaround team held additional meetings in each of the five communities identified as having schools that potentially could be recipients of SIG grants. These were among the 5 percent of "persistently lowest achieving schools" in Montana, as determined by federal guidelines. The OPI team again met with multiple stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, and community members to discuss the possibility of a new partnership between the state and local educational agencies. They expressed the belief that these schools could be better than they were, students at these schools could have their needs met and be achieving at higher levels, and expectations could be raised.

At the meetings, the OPI team presented data showing that there was a significant academic achievement gap that directly impacted future opportunities for both the students and the community as a whole. All stakeholders were able to ask questions and provide background for the OPI team. An overarching theme of the sessions was that school improvement must be the work not only of administrators and teachers, but also of the larger community and all stakeholders. Focus groups were convened to convey the gravity and importance of the existing situation in these schools and to empower stakeholders and draw out strengths and potential solutions that would sustain an improvement effort.

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OPI named these potential SIG schools "Montana Schools of Promise." To emphasize the role of the community in fulfilling the promise of school improvement, OPI embraced the High-Poverty High-Performing (HPHP) Readiness Model from Mass Insight, a Boston-based research organization that is prominent in national school turnaround efforts. This model (Figure 1 below) seemed most promising because it recognized the importance of social supports and shared responsibility among stakeholders in successful school turnarounds.

Figure 1.

HPHP READINESS MODEL

readiness to LEARN

1 **Safety, Discipline & Engagement**
Students feel secure and inspired to learn

2 **Action against Adversity**
Schools directly address their students' poverty-driven deficits

3 **Close Student-Adult Relationships**
Students have positive and enduring mentor/teacher relationships

readiness to TEACH

4 **Shared Responsibility for Achievement**
Staff feel deep accountability and a missionary zeal for student achievement

5 **Personalization of Instruction**
Individualized teaching based on diagnostic assessment and adjustable time on task

6 **Professional Teaching Culture**
Continuous improvement through collaboration and job-embedded learning

readiness to ACT

7 **Resource Authority**
School leaders can make mission-driven decisions regarding people, time, money & program

8 **Resource Ingenuity**
Leaders are adept at securing additional resources and leveraging partner relationships

9 **Agility in the Face of Turbulence**
Leaders, teachers, and systems are flexible and inventive in responding to constant unrest

OPI built its theory of action with the HPHP Readiness Model as a foundation. To guide its work, OPI also chose the Transformation Model, one of four approaches to school turnaround available under the requirements of the federal SIG program. Taken together, the two models provided a new, evidence-based framework for supporting low-performing schools in Montana.

Winter 2010 (Laying the Groundwork)

When the SIG requirements were released in January 2010, OPI had to make some difficult decisions about how to proceed. Although substantial funds from the federal government were available to help low-performing schools, OPI determined that the depth of system change needed for reform was beyond the capacity of the five schools identified as "Schools of Promise." The schools' records of little or no improvement for the last seven years prompted Superintendent Juneau and OPI to take bold steps. They proposed that OPI become the turnaround agent for these schools and provide direct services. This was consistent with the law, but it took time and effort to convince the U.S. Department of Education that this unusual approach merited special consideration. The next challenge was to work out the details with each of the schools and obtain approval from the U.S. Department of Education for OPI to be the turnaround provider under the Transformation Model. Final approval was not received until well into fall 2010. To set the stage for work to begin, OPI had to start building internal capacity, make concrete plans with the Schools of Promise, and lay the groundwork for a new type of collaboration.

To ensure full school participation, OPI established two preliminary agreements. The first was an implementation agreement between the local school board and OPI that outlined the school's commitment to implementing the federal requirements and identified the supports OPI would provide to the schools. The second agreement was a Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between local education agencies (LEAs) and the teachers' union, Montana Education Association/ Montana Federation of Teachers (MEA/MFT). OPI knew that this work would be impossible without the support and collaboration of MEA/MFT. When Superintendent Juneau approached the president of MEA/MFT with the state plan, an agreement was quickly reached to work side by side in obtaining the trust and support of union members. OPI and MEA/MFT leaders appeared together at school and community meetings, outlining the requirements of the grant. The parties had to agree to extra conditions to conform to the SIG requirements, including a new teacher and principal evaluation model that had a component based on student growth. As professionals, the group embraced the idea that something different needed to be done to change the outcomes for students. But it was still difficult to accept some of the federal requirements. Through much collaboration and hard work, agreements were reached for the final MOUs that allowed the SIG work to move forward in four out of five eligible school systems. The leaders of MEA/MFT continue to participate in meetings with OPI and the schools, and the field consultants are always available to listen to member concerns and share them with the leadership.

Spring 2010 (Learning About SIG Requirements)

In April 2010, Montana OPI and teams from the school systems came together to listen, learn, and discuss the implications of the new SIG requirements. Each school team consisted of four teachers, two administrators, two school board members, two students, and two community members. The administration could select two additional members, if desired. The message from OPI was that in working together toward a common vision, "change is possible." OPI was placing neither blame nor shame on anyone. It was simply letting everyone know that it was time to try something that had not been done before. As a result of the conversations with the teams, four core values were identified for the Montana Schools of Promise: 1) vision, 2) collaboration, 3) transparency, and 4) capacity building. The work would be built on these four values.

During spring 2010, a SIG Management Team began to come together at OPI. It consisted of the state superintendent, the director of Indian Education, the Title I director, and the superintendent's community learning partnership policy advisor, the latter three having comprised the internal leadership team that had researched SIG models, communicated with the U.S. Department of Education, and traveled with Superintendent Juneau to lay the groundwork in each community.

Summer 2010 (Developing School Teams)

By June 2010, four of the five eligible school systems had applied to be part of the SIG work and had signed both the implementation agreement and the MOU. In summer 2010, the basic pieces were in place. In addition to the SIG Management Team at OPI, the newly hired SIG program leadership included a SIG Unit Director, a Field Consultant for curriculum and instruction, a SIG School Advocate, and a Youth and Community Outreach Coordinator. The SIG Unit Director would coordinate the OPI staff that would be working in the schools and guide the onsite coaches through the improvement process. Based on their theory of action and the High-Poverty High-Performing (HPHP) Readiness Model, OPI hired and developed a network of onsite reform specialists to be housed at each school. The team at each school would include a Transformation Leader, Instructional Leader, School Board Coach, and Community Liaison.

A 2010 summer "boot camp" provided the teams from the four Schools of Promise and other SIG staff with an opportunity to come together for the first time. Staff members received orientation and training to ground them in the Transformation Model and to learn about the specific priorities and unique aspects of Montana's model. The boot camp also offered information for service/curriculum providers and other support services personnel, which was integral to defining the role of staff members at each school.

One of the OPI team's first actions was to assist each school improvement team in writing an implementation plan, called the District Action Plan (DAP). The state SIG team used this time to share the turnaround research and to foster understanding of the scope of efforts in the coming years. In particular, team members stressed the four recommendations from the Institute of Education Sciences practice guide on school turnaround:

1. Signal the need for dramatic change with strong leadership

2. Maintain a consistent focus on improving instruction

3. Provide visible improvements early in the turnaround process (quick wins)

4. Build a committed staff

At the same time, there were a number of non-negotiables put forward by OPI. Several of the federal requirements of the Transformation Model would be challenging. Addressing the requirements to "replace the principal and improve the school through comprehensive curriculum reform, professional development, extending learning time, and other strategies" had to be put in action. In communities in which principals were also tribal members, the issue of replacing the principal proved difficult. Also, interpreting and implementing comprehensive curriculum reform did not mean the same thing to everyone. OPI recommended specific new mathematics and language arts programs, as well as reading interventions, for the secondary schools. Agreeing to adopt and implement these programs, which had been selected by the content specialists and SIG team at OPI in the months before the school year began, was one requirement for the schools to participate. This condition was met with some resistance, particularly in schools that had just recently adopted other programs.

With the HPHP Readiness Model as a guide, the OPI SIG team identified factors and actions that would pave the way for increased student achievement and school success. This included three major areas of readiness:

Readiness to Learn
The HPHP Readiness model calls for student social/emotional/behavioral supports, parent engagement practices, and community engagement practices that contribute to the achievement of the project goals. In response:

- Community Liaisons were hired for each school. The liaisons attended and helped organize community events to talk with parents and community members about increasing student engagement and success in school, and also reached out to tribal programs to increase services and supports in the school.

- OPI brought in agency supports, such as the Montana Behavioral Initiative (positive behavioral supports), and secured the services of the University of Montana's National Native Children's Trauma Center to work with adults and students on issues related to trauma, safe school climate, and respect.

Readiness to Teach

The model specifies curriculum, instructional planning, classroom management, differentiation, and instructional delivery practices that will contribute to the achievement of project goals. In response:

- Instructional leaders were hired and placed in each school.

- Districts planned to provide longer school days, with some choosing to extend the school year to include more days.

- All SIG Schools of Promise adopted the same mathematics and language arts programs.

- A teacher and principal evaluation system known as the Schools of Promise Performance Appraisal System (SOPPAS) was developed and implemented.

- Collaboration time was established, in the form of professional learning communities and job-embedded professional development and learning.

- Particular support was provided to ensure high fidelity of program implementation.

- Summer school and after school learning opportunities were added.

Readiness to Act

The model includes leadership and decision-making practices and structures (boards and teams) that are intended to support the achievement of project goals. In response:

- New principals were hired at the four Schools of Promise.

- Transformation Leaders were hired and placed in each school.

- OPI's onsite teams led planning meetings to prepare a district action plan and budget for Year 1 activities.

- District planning teams were convened, including students, teachers, administrators, community members, board members, and parents. Teams were established by the district and approved by OPI.

- School Board Coaches were hired and placed in each community.

- All Schools of Promise administrators participated in monthly training focused on instructional leadership in a school reform process.

Fall 2010 (Implementing the Plan)

Implementing the transformation plan required a coordinated effort among many players, including the OPI, district and school staff, and community members. These roles can be viewed in terms of two teams—the OPI Management Team and the specific school and district teams, which include community members. Implementation can be best understood by looking at the specific roles of the team members.

OPI Management Team

The OPI Management Team met regularly to discuss progress, problems, and recommendations for changes. An expanded SIG team, including the SIG Unit Director, a Field Consultant, School Advocate Specialist, Statewide Youth and Community Outreach Coordinator, and the four onsite school staff (coaches/ leaders/liaisons) had regular conversations and met weekly to strategically plan for the upcoming week, resolve problems, and discuss how to best support the needs in the field.

The SIG Unit Director was responsible for overseeing the entire project and ensuring that all grant requirements were being met. As the new collaboration emerged between the schools and OPI, the director position was extremely important in establishing a clear message of the project and grant goals and setting the foundation for open communication. The expertise of the director in school functions and operations was a particular asset in the development of policies, protocols, and reporting mechanisms. The director worked continually with school leadership to maximize grant efforts and initiatives, ensure high fidelity, and provide ongoing support and guidance. In addition, the director had specific direct supervision over the Field Consultant, School Advocate Specialist, the Transformational Leaders, and the School Board Coaches. (The Statewide Youth and Community Outreach Coordinator was supervised directly by the Director of Indian Education at OPI.) Fundamental pieces initiated and developed in Year 1 under the director included new core programming, effective professional development and collaboration efforts, a comprehensive teacher evaluation system, increased learning time, district action plans, and school board supports.

The Statewide Youth and Community Outreach Coordinator, an experienced tribal member who had worked for the Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council for 13 years, was well aware of the challenges facing the schools and understood the difficulties sometimes encountered in gaining support from the tribal leaders. Throughout the years, public schools frequently have been isolated from the tribes and communities they serve. School leaders are often not members of the Native American community and don't understand the long contentious history between tribes and federal- and state-supported schools. Key to the outreach coordinator's role was recognizing that the mistrust, miscommunication, and misunderstandings among tribes and state leaders must be overcome in order to work together for the good of the students.

The SIG funding provided an opportunity to build bridges among the parents/families, tribes, communities, and schools. Unfortunately, the models that were being held up as "working" in such places as Chicago, inner-city New York, and other urban areas were difficult to translate to the context of Montana tribal communities. A program had to be developed that would increase communication among parties and address the specific characteristics and history of Montana Indians and tribal governments. The effort to ensure that student voices were heard during the school improvement process proved to be essential in fostering of productive relationships between parents/families and educators. Activities were planned for students to have an opportunity to add input into the school improvement plans. (In Year 2, this position has been renamed the Students, Families, and Communities Coordinator.)

In Year 1, the Field Consultant and School Advocate Specialist worked together to build the new foundations for curriculum, assessment, program implementation, and student learning. The Field Consultant was the main resource on site to offer support to the instructional leaders—developing teacher training and ensuring a solid program implementation and alignment to state standards. The Field Consultant established a framework for coaching and building job-embedded support to the instructional leaders. Simultaneously, the School Advocate Specialist garnered resources outside of the school, worked with various departments within the State Education Agency (SEA), and developed expectations for outside providers who came into the districts for large staff development projects. The School Advocate also brought in external resources and different viewpoints, while the Field Consultant worked with the resources available within the district to promote school improvement. The two positions were eventually realigned into a single position, the Teaching and Learning Coordinator, as districts gained an understanding of aligning instruction with standards; using data to identify student needs and place students appropriately in core and intervention classes; and using aligned program resources to prevent curriculum slippage.

In Year 1 of the SIG, the first priority was for everyone to gain a common understanding of the guidelines and implications of participating as a School of Promise, including grant requirements. An early challenge was to build cohesiveness among all of the programs that were operating in the Schools of Promise program. All staff attended workshops offered by the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI). The NCBI philosophy is grounded in an understanding of individual,

community, and system change that works to further cultural competence, collaboration and partnerships, and effective relationships within and across group identities. It was imperative for the Schools of Promise to build communities that would work collectively to improve learning for all students.

School staff also received training from the National Native Children's Trauma Resource Center about the impact of trauma on the lives of students, communities, and school staff. The training offered information on how trauma affects school life, including its implications for attendance, behavior, and classroom learning. In addition, school staff members were trained in the work of professional learning communities (PLCs). Each school formed PLCs to discuss what they were learning and to plan for changes in meeting the needs of their students.

School and District Teams

Per federal requirements, local school boards hired new principals at three of the schools and in the fourth, the superintendent assumed the role of principal. The on-site transformation team also included four members: Transformation Leader, Instructional Leader, Community Liaison, and School Board Coach. Following is a description of their roles and responsibilities.

The **Transformation Leader** is responsible for the SIG requirements to develop and increase teacher and administrator effectiveness, use comprehensive instructional reform strategies, increase learning time, create community-oriented schools, and provide operational flexibility and support. The duties of the Transformation Leader are:

- Ensure teaching and learning opportunities are enhanced and maximized to ensure student growth at all times

- Coordinate, organize, schedule, implement, and monitor the activities of the local School Improvement Team, the District Action Plan, and the overall functions of the SIG grant in coordination with the SIG School Transformation Director and other OPI staff

- Research, collect, analyze, manage, and report scholastic review data, school improvement activities, professional development practices, as well as methods to improve overall school administration functions

- Support local education agencies and their efforts to use accountability data to evaluate school performance and identify areas in need of improvement

- Coordinate with educational professionals, institutions, and technical advisors to support the school improvement process

- Identify the professional development needs of school and district leaders and develop/

support leadership capacity within the district

- Align planning and implementation between Title I initiatives and improvement efforts for overall school improvement (e.g., special education, Early Reading First, five-year comprehensive education plans, and the Montana Behavioral Initiative)

- Develop project objectives and activities that require interagency coordination/ collaboration and partners

- Assist school administrators in developing and furthering instructional leadership skills

The **Instructional Leader** is responsible for the SIG requirements to develop and increase teacher effectiveness, use comprehensive instructional reform strategies, increase learning time, and create community-oriented schools. The duties of the Instructional Leader are:

- Ensure teaching and learning opportunities are enhanced and maximized to support student achievement at all times

- Conduct a needs assessment of school districts, teachers, administrators, and curriculum

- Develop, direct, manage, and/or supervise all aspects of improving instructional strategies across a broad range of professional areas, including language arts and math

- Facilitate and build capacity of program design, evaluation, and implementation

- Establish criteria, processes, and procedures to develop classroom assessments (formative assessments) in a broad range of curriculum/content areas in consultation with the curriculum/content specialists of those areas

- Identify professional development needs, develop training modules, and codify and promote model lessons and instructional practices

- Focus on differentiated instruction, Response to Intervention, curriculum alignment, and the use of data to inform instruction

The **Community Liaison** is responsible for the SIG requirement to support community-oriented schools by providing ongoing mechanisms for student, family and community engagement. The duties of the Community Liaison are:

- Provide technical assistance and support to schools, school boards, administrators, staff, and stakeholders in the areas of youth engagement and well-being, school climate, and community involvement

- Assist in the analysis and development of a positive, enriching school climate

- Assist with the assessment and data collection of student/community perceptions

- Support advocacy efforts that encourage school districts to adopt and implement comprehensive youth-school-community policies

- Build awareness and educate the community leaders, educators, and the general public about youth-school-community engagement activities and motivate them to get involved

- Collaborate and build productive partnerships with specialists, outside partners, and civic groups to determine community needs and the availability of services and develop goals for meeting those needs

- Establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with teachers, school administrators, students, youth councils, school boards, educational associations, state and federal agencies, and the general public

- Support and build capacity among these entities and individuals to engage with families and students at the highest levels

- Represent student and community voice in all meetings and decisions

The **School Board Coach** is responsible for the SIG requirements to develop and increase teacher and school leader effectiveness, increase learning time, create community-oriented schools, and provide operational flexibility and support. The duties of the School Board Coach are:

- Conduct an initial/ongoing assessment of board needs via one-on-one interviews with board members and appropriate school and district staff

- Identify structures that will promote board engagement in increasing student achievement through:

    o Creating a trusting environment

    o Establishing a shared vision and high expectations

    o Creating a collaborative culture

    o Embedding continuous improvement and support in all policy and decision making

- Attend monthly board meetings and build the capacity of trustees and the administration to develop and implement board agendas

- Develop the capacity of board members by providing resources/information, targeted professional development, and training sessions

- Increase capacity around operations, including financial health and budgeting

These transformation leaders were all in place by August 2010 and worked closely with the administrators to ensure that each school entered the 2010–2011 school year looking and feeling different. In one school, this included cutting down a chain link fence that surrounded the grounds. Other quick wins included appropriate student placement in core programs and interventions to ensure adequate support. Also, in preparation for the Common Core State Standards and increased learning expectations, all students in grades 7–8 were placed in courses that would help them reach Algebra I–level proficiency before entering high school. The high school programs moved to an integrated curriculum to enable students to build foundational knowledge between disciplines as they progress through high school.

The Instructional Coaches at each School of Promise worked with all professional development providers to ensure that best practices were viewed within the context of the culture and values of the American Indian community. Because new English language arts and mathematics programs were adopted and implemented during the first year, teachers received specific professional development and ongoing support from these providers. The training was supplemented and supported in the classroom by the instructional coaches.

The Community Liaison in each district was responsible for talking with all stakeholders and setting the stage for the positive change to come, while also remaining mindful of the culture and values of the community. The liaisons began by gathering feedback from the community, attending meetings, and breaking down communication barriers between the community and the schools. They attended sports activities, powwows, and other tribal-supported activities. Participating in community activities imbued the position with more credibility and provided some already established connections with members of the community. The liaisons received training from Solid Foundation and planned to introduce a home visiting project.

A unique feature of the Montana Schools of Promise was the position of School Board Coach. Each School of Promise was assigned a School Board Coach who reported directly to the SIG unit director. This role was designed to support the school boards in all their work. The coaches attended all board meetings, retreats, and training. Their goal was to leave the boards with the knowledge, skills, and tools to continue to support the schools long after the SIG funding was over.

The School Board Coaches began their efforts by establishing good working relationships with all trustees. One of their primary goals was to keep the school boards focused on student achievement. Many of the coaches in Year 1 also undertook the work of policy evaluation and updating.

The Schools of Promise school boards came together four times to receive additional support and to learn from each other. At these sessions, they discussed such issues as designing better structures for board meetings, finding ways to involve the public, using data to make good decisions, replacing outdated policies and procedures, aligning budgets to meet objectives, and crafting mission and vision statements that align with SIG goals. In addition, each school board had its own retreat to address issues specifically relevant to their community and school.

Because so much was happening in the Schools of Promise, a concern was that school board members might experience "change fatigue." The school board coach was charged with helping the board members keep things in perspective by establishing trusting relationships and helping them work through their inevitable concerns.

Teachers and Instruction

No matter how many teams are in place, research has shown that teachers are the single most important influence on the education of children. This project asked a lot of teachers. For some, it meant reexamining their philosophy of teaching and having confidence that this new system would help them improve the achievement and accomplishments of their students. Providing ongoing, high-quality assistance and support to teachers in the Schools of Promise was an essential feature of the program. As previously discussed, teachers in all of the Schools of Promise received job-embedded professional development, coaching, and resources from various members of the SIG team, in addition to training by external providers. The emphasis in this first year was on getting core programs and interventions in place.

In addition, teachers were offered the optional opportunity to participate in the National Board Certification Program. In the first year, 53 teachers signed on to engage in Take One, part of the process of becoming National Board certified. The teaching and learning coordinator and two nationally board-certified teachers served as mentors for those pursuing the Take One portion of the certification. About half of the original cohort completed the process. Even though this project was funded through a partnership with the National Board and the MEA/MFT, it was considered an opportunity to align the goals of the SIG with additional professional development. Five teachers signed up to complete the project to become National Board–certified and will submit their portfolios in April 2012. A new cohort of 12 teachers entered the program in year two.

Schools of Promise Performance Appraisal System (SOPPAS)

Evaluating Teachers

As part of the SIG requirements, each school must implement an effective teacher and administrator performance appraisal system. In crafting the Montana system, the OPI SIG team explored various models used across the country and determined that the best fit for the state was the Delaware Performance Assessment System (DPAS II). This system, based on Charlotte Danielson's instructional framework, provided the conceptual basis for the Schools of Promise Performance Appraisal System (SOPPAS).

The SOPPAS for teacher evaluation includes five components:

1. Planning and preparation—assessed through observation

2. Classroom environment—assessed through observation

3. Instruction—assessed through observation

4. Professional responsibilities—based on a form submitted by the educator

5. Student improvement—involving a goal-setting process

The first three components are completed through actual classroom observation. The "professional responsibilities" and "student growth goal" documents are shared with a third-party evaluator and the building administrator during a pre-observation conference. Lesson plans indicating what the upcoming lesson will include, as well as some type of formative assessment, are included in this initial conversation.

> In Year 1 (and again in Year 2), all evaluations of certified staff were conducted by third-party evaluators, with the building administrators observing all processes as they became familiar and adept at using the overall system. The third-party evaluators were selected from a pool of retired educators/administrators and trained in the assessment process by the evaluation and professional development specialist, who was part of the state SIG staff. Third-party evaluators were also responsible for collaborating with each teacher and his or her principal in creating personal improvement plans.

> Building administrators were encouraged to visit classrooms on a regular basis. A Classroom Feedback form was used to provide meaningful feedback to teachers as principals gathered evidence of the following:

1. Engaging students to learn

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SCHOOLS OF
PROMISE:

2. Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness

3. Communicating clearly and accurately

4. Using questioning and discussion techniques

5. Instructional materials and instructional practices

6. Classroom environment

   This information was to be shared immediately with teachers, giving them feedback about a particular aspect of their instructional practice. However, this information was only intended for immediate instructional support and was not a part of the overall evaluation process. In addition to these informal classroom feedback sessions, the yearlong process included formal classroom observations, pre- and post-observation conferences, and the submission of each teacher's professional responsibilities. Principals and third-party evaluators took part in all scheduled observations and conferences. During Year 1, transformational leaders participated in all goal-setting conferences and post-observation conferences. The purpose of this was to ensure the fidelity and validity of the process. OPI staff participated in random conferences for both certified staff and administrators. In Year 2 of the grant, building administrators, classroom teachers and specialists, and transformational leaders completed a year-end SOPPAS survey. As part of the year-end data collection process, various staff development topics were acquired to support future job-embedded staff development.

   The staff appraisals began in the spring semester after all staff were given an orientation to the SOPPAS model. It became evident early on, based on feedback from the third-party evaluators and the transformational leaders, that Component 5 of the SOPPAS model (setting individual student growth goals) would be a challenge. The growth goal examples that were collected at the end of 2010–2011 showed that this was an area needing further training and support. One explanation for the difficulty was that the other four components required teachers to incorporate changes in the way they planned and delivered lessons, reflected on their practice, and used formative assessment practices in their classrooms. Meeting those expectations and also setting student growth goals proved challenging. Therefore, in the first year, the summative assessment did not include Component 5.

In addition to adopting the SOPPAS, each SIG school district created a Labor/Management Committee consisting of representatives of the teachers' union and the administration. These committees have explored and discussed the many nuances of implementation that have arisen in both Year 1 and Year 2. This dialogue, in turn, has provided the state planning team with a means of continuing conversations with the districts and the state teachers' union. A SOPPAS Administrator Handbook was created to assist building administrators in the future implementation of the SOPPAS cycle. The handbook was designed as a resource to provide guidance to administrators in maintaining a consistent, predictable teacher evaluation system even when administrator turnover occurs.

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Evaluating Administrators

As previously mentioned, teachers are not the only ones who undergo evaluation under the SOPPAS. Administrator evaluation is an integral part of the SIG initiative. In Year 1 and Year 2 of the grant, all building administrators participated in the SOPPAS administrator cycle, which is based on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) National Standards developed in 2008. The five SOPPAS components for administrators are: Vision and Goals, Culture of Learning, Management, Professional Responsibilities, and Student Improvement. The first three components are observable items and are based on tangible evidence for each category, which is acquired by a third-party evaluator. The third-party evaluator is a trained evaluator knowledgeable about the national ISLLC standards and the role leaders have in the school reform process. In the first two years of the grant, the third-party evaluator modeled the entire cycle for the district superintendent, who will assume responsibility for these evaluations in year three of the grant. The SOPPAS administrator process is similar to the SOPPAS teacher evaluation process in that principals participate in a fall goal-setting session and meet periodically with the third-party evaluator to discuss tangible performance data and to determine overall competency levels based on the ISLLC standards. As part of the SOPPAS administrator evaluation, principals may be taken through the planned program of improvement process as part of continued growth and development. Administrators participate in a fall orientation to gain insight into the overall process and requirements.

Improving the System

At the end of the 2010–2011 school year, all staff, administrators, and third-party evaluators were to receive a survey to ascertain their perceptions of the SOPPAS process, from orientation to implementation. However, this survey was not delivered to all parties due to unforeseen circumstances in two of the four districts.

OPI staff analyzed the data that were collected from the SOPPAS evaluations and used the information to fine tune plans for the 2011–2012 school year. Despite the limited amount of survey data available, OPI was able to identify one significant staffing and structural change in the SOPPAS process. Initially, the state SIG planning team provided oversight for the implementation of SOPPAS. After the first year, an evaluation and professional development specialist was hired to oversee the implementation of both the teacher and administrator evaluation cycles because greater support for the systems was identified as an area of need. In addition, the evaluations suggested several areas needing attention and support. The following elements from Component 2 (Classroom Environment) and Component 3 (Classroom Instruction) were marked for job-embedded professional development:

- Improving student engagement

- Forming positive relations with students

- Using higher level questioning strategies

- Providing lessons that stimulate and engage students

Background and Planning for Year 2

Summer 2011 (Setting a New Vision)

One positive outcome stood out in Year 1: SIG high schools saw definite growth in reading and mathematics on the state CRT assessment. While it is too early to make any conclusive arguments, this was very encouraging and perhaps an affirmation that positive changes are happening.

Members of the SIG management team learned a great deal about themselves and about OPI as an organization during the first year of the SIG program. They also learned that as the Schools of Promise evolved, the skills, supports, and capacity of team members also needed to evolve. After careful review by Superintendent Juneau—and in consultation with all SIG staff and input from the local schools—the structure of the OPI team was reorganized to include the following positions: a School Transformation Director (replacing the SIG Unit Director position); a Teaching and Learning Coordinator; a Students, Families, and Community Coordinator; a Caring Schools Coordinator; a Contracts and Logistics Coordinator; an Evaluation and Professional Development Specialist; and an AmeriCorps/VISTA member.

During the first year, much of the improvement work centered on creating infrastructure for the school and district, as well as changing the culture of learning. Superintendent Juneau and Mandy Smoker Broaddus, newly chosen as the School Transformation Director, began with earnest discussions about successes and challenges to date and the need to set a new vision moving forward. This would include focusing more intently on instruction, supporting school infrastructure needs (particularly with data), building relationships, increasing communication efforts, and increasing collaboration within the community to specifically incorporate values and culture. In preparation for Year 2 (2011–2012), the Schools of Promise were invited to attend another summer boot camp. In addition, all Schools of Promise administrative teams received extensive training in the Institute of Education Science's Doing What Works professional development module, Using Student Achievement Data to Increase Student Achievement. This module discussed how to create a data vision, implement student growth goal setting, and how to implement and be intentional about classroom formative assessment practices.

Another significant change that took place in August 2011, as the Year 2 effort began, was the

termination of the implementation agreement between OPI and Lodge Grass High School. Per the agreement, either the OPI or the local board of trustees had the ability to dissolve the agreement for SIG-related services and resources. As the fiscal agent that is responsible for ensuring that all federal SIG grant requirements are being met, the OPI made the difficult decision based on lack of progress in key areas, including cooperation with local OPI staff.

As the 2010–2011 evaluators gained a better understanding of the SOPPAS model, new third-party evaluators came on board and there was additional training during August 2011. Planning for Year 2 included eliminating some logistical problems by creating better communication methods among the evaluators, the transformation leaders, and the building administrators. Building administrators were required to continue their ongoing collaboration with the third-party evaluators by observing each pre-observation conference, classroom observation, and formative conference. Additionally, a minimum of two complete SOPPAS cycles were to be completed by the building administrator with support given by the third-party evaluator.

Schools of Promise had the benefit of continuity heading into Year 2, as Instructional Leaders, Transformation Leaders, Community Liaisons, and School Board Coaches continued in their roles at each school.

School Year 2011–2012 (Making Adjustments)

Based on Year 1 experiences, OPI made the following staffing and procedural changes in Year 2:

- The SIG Unit Director position was reconsidered and organizational adjustments were made

- The former OPI Management Team was dissolved and a School Transformation Director assumed responsibility for all SIG staff and activities

- Work continued in support of school boards, staff, leadership, students, and community members, in addition to ensuring all SIG requirements were being met and will result in increased student learning

- There was further development of a teacher/principal evaluation system (including a student growth component), student and staff incentive systems, afterschool and summer school programming, and Response to Intervention programs

- Fine-tuning the district action plans was identified as a priority for Year 2 and support for ensuring these plans and budgets are implemented has been ongoing

- The statewide Youth Outreach Coordinator position became the Students, Families, and Communities Coordinator position

- A Caring Schools Coordinator and Wraparound Facilitators were added to the team to develop a community-based approach to students mental health needs

- The SIG teams in charge of developing the District Action Plans (DAPs) shifted to include two administrators, two teachers, to paraprofessionals, two community members, two trustees, and two students, with onsite OPI staff continuing to assist

Also during this period, professional development has been offered on both new and old topics, including writing across the curriculum, School Trauma and Resiliency (STAR) training, differentiated instruction, and Common Core State Standards. Following each professional development session, the Instructional Coaches work alongside teachers to model lessons, assist with lesson plans, and give feedback to help put the new learning into practice. Additional support came from a Response to Intervention (RTI) coach who is housed in the OPI Special Education Division. RTI has been in Montana schools for several years and the SIG funding provided extra support to help teachers in the Schools of Promise embrace this philosophy. The RTI coach began working with the schools to provide additional assistance to the teachers and instructional coaches. Besides improving the effectiveness of tier 1 instruction, the training received from the RTI coach helped teachers use multiple forms of data, including formative assessment, to inform instruction and to determine when and if to use interventions.

Students are being held to higher expectations in mathematics, reading, writing, social studies, and science. However, it is understood that if teachers don't build caring relationships with students, there is often resistance from students that is difficult to overcome. To help address this need, the high schools added an advisory class for all students and teachers. This gives teachers and students the opportunity to engage in character-building, culturally relevant activities that will help students attain academic success and acquire the skills necessary to be productive members of their communities.

Another positive development has been in the area of School Board Coaches. The Schools of Promise have embraced this support and their boards are now taking the lead in determining agenda items, requesting resources from coaches, and taking responsibility for helping guide the superintendent and schools. They are truly partners in the mission to improve the quality of education for all of their students by establishing budgets, setting policy, and making decisions that support student learning and school improvement efforts.

SOPPAS

During a fall 2011 professional development day, the SOPPAS information was shared with both new and veteran staff members. All-staff orientations served as a refresher for continuing staff members and individual sessions were available for those who were unclear about expectations.

As Year 2 of the SOPPAS began, teachers were more confident in what was being asked of them. They were familiar with the entire cycle and the roles and responsibilities of all parties. They became more comfortable with having observers in the classroom. SOPPAS training focused on helping teachers define, create, and write student growth goals (Component 5 of the model). The OPI Evaluation and Staff Development Specialist provided online training sessions, which included specific examples developed by the evaluators. These examples were also used in the pre-conferences. As in Year 1, the building administrator participated in these conferences in order to understand the process and to be able to implement it with fidelity.

While not part of the evaluation process, the Instructional Leaders on each campus are also working with the teachers to design learning progressions and connect them with the school goals. In addition, schools are receiving assistance with goal setting via visits from the evaluation and professional development specialist from OPI.

Caring Schools Coordinator

Early in the process, the state SIG team identified the Readiness to Learn component of the HPHP Readiness Model as an area requiring additional support to enable individual students and families to be successful. OPI identified the National Wraparound Initiative as an approach to providing this support. The initiative emphasizes a coordinated, community-based, family-driven, and youth-guided system of care. During Year 2, additional funding from the Montana Mental Health Settlement Trust enabled OPI to hire a full-time Caring Schools Coordinator to administer a wraparound program and to place, train, and certify a Wraparound Facilitator in SIG schools in the Wyola, Pryor, Lame Deer, and Frazer tribal communities.

The position of the Caring Schools Coordinator was filled by an experienced mental health advocate and former suicide prevention specialist for the Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council Planting Seeds of Hope Project. She works with the wraparound facilitators in each community to ensure training and support needs are met, as well as to provide communication about the initiative's goals and purpose. Facilitators have held a series of stakeholder meetings to describe the wraparound process and how it fits into the cultural framework of each community.

The wraparound model focuses on the strengths of the youth and the family. After a youth is referred for this process, the wraparound facilitator visits the family and builds a network of support based on the strengths, needs, and culture of the youth and family. Services are typically provided for up to 18 months.

The model is one of neighbor helping neighbor. A crucial element of this program is the philosophy that when a person needs help, it is important to build on his or her strengths and to empower that person to make good decisions, rather than focusing on deficits and trying to "fix things." Even though it was not initially designed to address the needs of American Indians, this model fits well with the existing values and belief systems of many tribes.

The Caring Schools Coordinator is currently developing an implementation guide based on the National Wraparound Initiative Guide, along with resource materials that will "speak the language" of tribal communities and reflect their rich cultures and protocols. Since the grant ends in December 2012, halfway through the third year of the SIG, OPI is seeking additional funds to continue this powerful work.

Students, Families, and Communities Coordinator

(Formerly the Statewide Youth and Community Outreach Coordinator)

In planning for Year 2, OPI sought to improve the role of PTAs and other vehicles in supporting greater parent voice and initiative. To inform this planning, they developed a Community Readiness Survey and administered it in fall 2011 in the communities serving three Schools of Promise. In each community, OPI asked multiple stakeholders to respond to a 35-question survey. Results indicated that these communities were not ready to participate in such formal, structured organizations. However, the surveys indicated that stakeholders were interested in participating in more informal gatherings that included discussions about issues facing students and the need to break down barriers between the schools and the communities. All three locations held daylong meetings in the fall that brought together elders, students, parents, and community members. There have also been efforts to include the school superintendent in bridging barriers.

One significant activity that is expected to help build the relationship between home and school is the Parent Teacher Home Visiting Project. Teachers received training on how to conduct a home visit according to the protocols established by a national model. Since many of the teachers are non-Native, a Native teacher and/or the Community Liaison accompanies the non-Native teacher on several home visits until the teacher feels that a trusting relationship has been formed. The teachers sit with the parents and listen to the hopes and dreams they have for their children. There is no paperwork involved and the stage is set for open, strengths-based conversations.

In the second year of the SIG grants, the Community Liaisons and teachers are also trying to make more meaningful connections with the students. Two of the three high schools in the Schools of Promise do not have a student council. Nevertheless, it is very important that the student voice is heard and that students have a say in planning and decision making. There are early indications that efforts to connect with students will pay off as students are becoming key players in the formation of various afterschool programs. As teachers see increased student interest and engagement in these afterschool activities, they are more apt to offer their time and expertise in finding other outlets for the students. A prime motivation for engaging in these extracurricular activities is to keep the students engaged in positive activities. Some of these activities may even lead to the development of new courses, which may be offered during the 2012–2013 school year.

This is an affirmation of the research that says students are more apt to be engaged in school and

school activities if they find it relevant to their lives. The lure of drugs and alcohol is hard to refuse when there are no positive alternatives. Not only do these extended–school day activities provide opportunities for the students to stay out of trouble, they also offer an insight into possible school and career choices. There are also preliminary efforts to create high school student lounges to provide a safe and welcoming place for students to gather. While it is still too early to say that the students have a unified purpose and vision, they have responded very favorably to the community coordinator and to the expanded opportunities to be engaged in meaningful activities. A VISTA volunteer is working with the students, families, and community coordinator to document activities, conversations, and recommendations on effective student and parent engagement strategies.

Winter 2012 (Putting the Pieces Together)

At the end of January 2012, all Schools of Promise district leadership teams convened to work on strengthening Component 5 of the SOPPAS—creating student growth goals. Teams were given additional worksheets and planning templates to assist them in the acquisition of the targeted learning goals. Also in January 2012, all Schools of Promise administrative teams met to refine their thinking about the vision and mission of each school.

Throughout the winter and the remainder of the school year, OPI staff, superintendents, and school staff will be working to make the community more aware of SIG efforts. They are doing this by attending tribal meetings and hosting various cultural and student events. School staffs are also establishing teacher incentive systems that continue to support strategies tied to the four recommendations on school turnaround (see page 5) and to achieve the following outcomes:

- Increased student/teacher attendance

- Increased student engagement and community involvement

- Increased CRT and MAPS scores

- Lower dropout rates

Thus far we have learned that there are many pieces of the SIG work that have to fit together in order to reach the desired outcomes. The OPI SIG team, Schools of Promise leaders, and school teams must work together seamlessly, sharing the difficult work of school turnaround with their communities. Lines of communication radiate in many directions, from OPI to the field, through community meetings, back to the schools, and circling back to the OPI SIG team.

Theory of Action and Logic Model

While the OPI management team was well aware of its goals and the actions needed to improve outcomes for students in the Schools of Promise, they had never articulated those goals and actions in a formal statement. During Year 2, team members came together to refine their theory of action and represent their beliefs and vision in a logic model. This logic model (see Figure 2) represents what team members collectively believe are the services and outcomes that will lead to improved student achievement and other positive outcomes in the Schools of Promise. The model will be used to establish consistent messages and develop a common vision among stakeholders working on behalf of all Montana students.
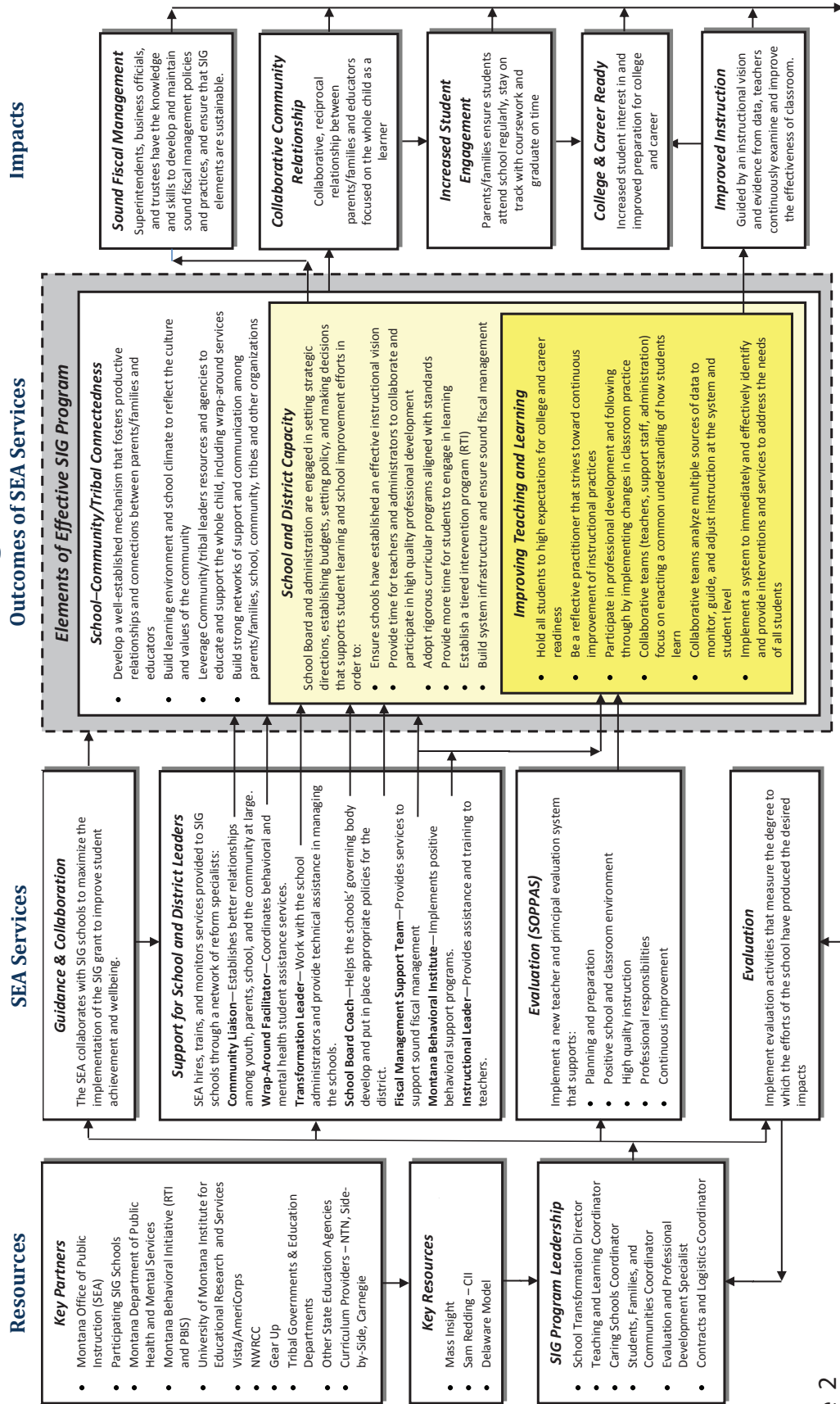
Montana SIG Transformation Logic Model

Resources	SEA Services	Outcomes of SEA Services	Impacts

Resources

Key Partners
- Montana Office of Public Instruction (SEA)
- Participating SIG Schools
- Montana Department of Public Health and Mental Services
- Montana Behavioral Initiative (RTI and PBIS)
- University of Montana Institute for Educational Research and Services
- Vista/AmeriCorps
- NWRCC
- Gear Up
- Tribal Governments & Education Departments
- Other State Education Agencies
- Curriculum Providers – NTN, Side-by-Side, Carnegie

Key Resources
- Mass Insight
- Sam Redding – CII
- Delaware Model

SIG Program Leadership
- School Transformation Director
- Teaching and Learning Coordinator
- Caring Schools Coordinator
- Students, Families, and Communities Coordinator
- Evaluation and Professional Development Specialist
- Contracts and Logistics Coordinator

SEA Services

Guidance & Collaboration
The SEA collaborates with SIG schools to maximize the implementation of the SIG grant to improve student achievement and wellbeing.

Support for School and District Leaders
SEA hires, trains, and monitors services provided to SIG schools through a network of reform specialists:

Community Liaison—Establishes better relationships among youth, parents, school, and the community at large.

Wrap-Around Facilitator—Coordinates behavioral and mental health student assistance services.

Transformation Leader—Work with the school administrators and provide technical assistance in managing the schools.

School Board Coach—Helps the schools' governing body develop and put in place appropriate policies for the district.

Fiscal Management Support Team—Provides services to support sound fiscal management

Montana Behavioral Institute—Implements positive behavioral support programs.

Instructional Leader—Provides assistance and training to teachers.

Evaluation (SOPPAS)
Implement a new teacher and principal evaluation system that supports:
- Planning and preparation
- Positive school and classroom environment
- High quality instruction
- Professional responsibilities
- Continuous improvement

Evaluation
Implement evaluation activities that measure the degree to which the efforts of the school have produced the desired impacts

Outcomes of SEA Services

Elements of Effective SIG Program

School–Community/Tribal Connectedness
- Develop a well-established mechanism that fosters productive relationships and connections between parents/families and educators
- Build learning environment and school climate to reflect the culture and values of the community
- Leverage Community/tribal leaders resources and agencies to educate and support the whole child, including wrap-around services
- Build strong networks of support and communication among parents/families, school, community, tribes and other organizations

School and District Capacity
School Board and administration are engaged in setting strategic directions, establishing budgets, setting policy, and making decisions that supports student learning and school improvement efforts in order to:
- Ensure schools have established an effective instructional vision
- Provide time for teachers and administrators to collaborate and participate in high quality professional development
- Adopt rigorous curricular programs aligned with standards
- Provide more time for students to engage in learning
- Establish a tiered intervention program (RTI)
- Build system infrastructure and ensure sound fiscal management

Improving Teaching and Learning
- Hold all students to high expectations for college and career readiness
- Be a reflective practitioner that strives toward continuous improvement of instructional practices
- Participate in professional development and following through by implementing changes in classroom practice
- Collaborative teams (teachers, support staff, administration) focus on enacting a common understanding of how students learn
- Collaborative teams analyze multiple sources of data to monitor, guide, and adjust instruction at the system and student level
- Implement a system to immediately and effectively identify and provide interventions and services to address the needs of all students

Impacts

Sound Fiscal Management
Superintendents, business officials, and trustees have the knowledge and skills to develop and maintain sound fiscal management policies and practices, and ensure that SIG elements are sustainable.

Collaborative Community Relationship
Collaborative, reciprocal relationship between parents/families and educators focused on the whole child as a learner

Increased Student Engagement
Parents/families ensure students attend school regularly, stay on track with coursework and graduate on time

College & Career Ready
Increased student interest in and improved preparation for college and career

Improved Instruction
Guided by an instructional vision and evidence from data, teachers continuously examine and improve the effectiveness of classroom.

Figure 2

Montana SIG Logic Model Rev. 12/5/2011

Looking Ahead to Year 3, 2012–2013

Although adjustments are inevitable, the focus in Year 3 will be on increasing sustainability of the project by embedding practices and transferring the responsibility for improvement to the school community. As many pieces of the model have been interwoven over time, it will be necessary to help the schools determine which initiatives or components have been successful and should be carried on. This will also require additional assistance with budgets and financial planning to ensure the schools have adequate resources and the flexibility necessary to continue the work.

As indicated in their logic model, the OPI team members believe that the actions they are taking will lead to an instructional vision in which principals and teachers use evidence from data to continuously examine and improve the effectiveness of classroom instruction. Improving and enhancing instructional leadership and support will be a key goal for transformational and instructional leaders in Year 3.

The schools are a little more than halfway through the SIG process. Already there have been success stories in all aspects of the project. Students now enter systems and are appropriately placed in courses that meet their specific instructional needs. School teams are engaged in RTI training and work onsite to better use and understand data. Students plan for and attend joint Schools of Promise student council meetings and conferences. Superintendents and business officials participate in monthly finance calls. Trustees continue to access accurate information in decision-making processes that are focused on student achievement. We hope that all of these small stories will come together to support dramatic, lasting improvement among all of the Schools of Promise. We look forward to achieving the common vision that all students can be engaged in learning and can leave high school ready for college or careers.

Acknowledgments

It will never be said that school turnaround is easy. This is truly hard work. However, many people have willingly accepted the challenge because they are working to brighten the future of Montana's children, especially those children whose present circumstances—much less futures—are extremely challenging. We thank this group of tireless and dedicated professionals who are trying to create a new era of success in Montana schools.

We would especially like to recognize OPI's partners: those organizations and initiatives in the state that are helping to ensure that the turnaround process is successful in the Schools of Promise. Some of the agencies and initiatives involved are:

- Montana Department of Public Health and Mental Services

- Montana Behavioral Initiative (RTI and Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, PBIS)

- University of Montana Institute for Educational Research and Services

- Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS)

- Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA)

- AmeriCorps

- Fort Peck Community College

- Montana Education Association/Montana Federation of Teachers

Acronyms

ARRA—American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

EOE—Education, Opportunity, and Equity

CRT—Criterion reference test

DAP—District action plan

DPAS—Delaware Performance Assessment System

HPHP—High-poverty High-performing

ISLLC—Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium

LEA—Local education agencies

MAPS—Measures of Academic Progress

MEA/MFT—Montana Education Association/Montana Federation of Teachers

MOU—Memorandum of understanding

NCBI—National Coalition Building Institute

OPI—(Montana) Office of Public Instruction

PLC—Professional learning community

PBIS—Positive Behavior Intervention Supports

RTI—Response to Intervention

SEA— State education agency

SIG—School Improvement Grant

SOPPAS—Schools of Promise Performance Appraisal System

STAR—School trauma and resiliency

USDE—United States Department of Education

VISTA—Volunteers in Service to America

Montana
Schools of
Promise
opi.mt.gov

Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

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